

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tuesday, October 2, 2007
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
1244 Storrs Road (behind People's Bank in Storrs Commons)**

4:00 PM

Meeting Notes

Present: Chair Philip Lodewick, Steve Bacon, Tom Callahan, Bruce Clouette, Barry Feldman, Matt Hart, Janet Jones, Frank McNabb, Peter Nicholls, Betsy Paterson, Kristin Schwab, Phil Spak, Betsy Treiber, David Woods

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Kathleen Paterson

1. Call to Order

Philip Lodewick called the meeting to order at 4.05 pm.

2. Opportunity for Public to Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

Dean Woods made a motion to approve the meeting notes. Matt Hart seconded the motion. The meeting notes were approved unanimously.

4. Director's Report

Cynthia van Zelm reported to the Board the following:

The Nominating Committee will meet before the November Board meeting to discuss the idea of a Board of Advisors.

The Executive Committee will also meet before the Board meeting to continue the discussion of representation on the Executive Committee of the Town and the University, and review a draft of the Partnership Strategic Plan.

Ms. van Zelm noted that there are openings on the following committees: Finance and Administration (4), Membership Development (6), Nominating (1), and Business Development and Retention (1). Only Business has a waiting list. Most people on the waiting list are interested in Advertising

and Promotion, and Planning and Design. She said committees do not have to be filled but she wanted committee chairs to know that there are spots open.

Ms. van Zelm, Mayor Paterson, Town Manager Matt Hart, and Macon Toledano will be meeting with a reporter from the Economist to talk about the Storrs Center project.

Ms. van Zelm passed around her pictures from the Cultural Towns: Cultural Landscapes symposium in New Harmony, IN. She said there was a good discussion of the benefits of a college/university town. Mr. Lodewick noted that he was recently in Portland, ME, and noted the vitality there which he hopes can be emulated in Mansfield.

Ms. van Zelm said she is continuing to work with Mr. Hart on linking to the private website that would highlight Mansfield's attractions and businesses.

5. Update on Storrs Center Project and Next Steps

Ms. van Zelm said there was no update on the state bonding bill which is holding up any projects being considered on the Bond Commission agenda.

Betsy Paterson said she spoke to State Senator Don Williams who indicated that the impasse was causing some towns to have to borrow money for school construction.

Ms. Paterson also said she had called former Congressman Rob Simmons, the Governor's Business Advocate, to discuss the Storrs Center project.

Tom Callahan said it is important to clarify with Senator Williams and State Representative Denise Merrill the status of the request for parking garage and relocation funding if it is not in the bonding package. Is the Town's request still pending since it was part of an Urban Action Grant application (submitted 2+ years ago)? Ms. Paterson will check with Senator Williams and Representative Merrill.

Mr. Lodewick asked what the alternatives are for parking garage funding. Mr. Hart said discussion is still at the staff level but the Town has hired a parking consultant who will do peer review on Desman's work. One issue that needs to be resolved is how the availability of free parking affects the parking garage and street parking (which will not be free). The consultant will look at this as part of his mandate. The consultant has done work in other Connecticut communities.

6. Report from Committees

Advertising and Promotion

Dean Woods said that Ms. van Zelm had been on WTIC's radio show before the UConn football game to talk about the Storrs Center project. Ms. van Zelm said that WTIC had been very supportive of helping to promote the project, with leadership from the UConn Athletic Department.

Dean Woods said that the newsletter had gone out and commended Kathleen Paterson for her good work.

Ms. van Zelm said the Storrs Center DVD had been completed and was sent to the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism (funding agency). She said it took on more of an historical perspective rather than a marketing perspective.

Festival on the Green

Ms. Paterson said the Festival was the best one yet! The attendance, weather and music were great.

She is asking Committee members to stay on for next year.

Dean Woods noted that the Advertising and Promotion Committee had passed a motion recommending that the Partnership organize the Festival again.

Ms. Paterson said there were a lot of new people at the Festival. She commended Ms. K. Paterson for jumping right in and for her idea of gift baskets with the proceeds going to the Partnership.

She asked Board members for comments about the Festival. Mr. Bacon suggested diverting traffic on to Mansfield Road during the parade as there was a back up.

Betsy Treiber suggested having more people in the parade and not just children. She said the UConn marching band was fabulous. Ms. Paterson thought maybe there could be floats next year.

Kristin Schwab said with the change of the parade to Storrs Road there is a need to advertise this in terms of having enough people up on Storrs Road from the Festival grounds to watch the parade.

Ms. van Zelm and Ms. Paterson thanked the Board, Town and the University for all their help. Ms. Paterson noted that there was even more

participation from the University this year. Dean Woods noted that the School of Fine Arts was represented by the Benton, Puppetry program, the Art Dept., and the Connecticut Repertory Theater.

Finance and Administration

Mr. Callahan said there had already been discussion about the Dog Lane (DL)-1 building and the parking garages.

An important step was taken last night when the Mansfield Inland Wetlands Agency approved the application from LeylandAlliance for a wetlands license. The project is now fully permitted at the local level. The permits that are still needed are from the Department of Environmental Protection, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the CT State Traffic Commission (STC). The STC process will be longer and more involved.

Mr. Callahan said Leyland did a good job of moving the wetlands application along.

Mr. Callahan said the Committee had its quarterly meeting with Leyland represented by Howard Kaufman and Macon Toledano. They discussed the current real estate market and its effect on the Storrs Center project and their other projects. They did note that there had been some slowdown in sales, particularly, in the northeast and they were being prudent about expenses.

Ms. Paterson asked about the timing for review of the outstanding permits. Ms. van Zelm said her understanding is that it will take 3 to 6 months for the review by the CT Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The estimate for the STC is 6 to 8 months. Mr. Callahan noted that Leyland has had several meetings with the DEP and the Corps of Engineers – more than with the CT Department of Transportation although they have met with them as well (along with Ms. van Zelm and Mansfield Public Works Director Lon Hultgren).

Barry Feldman asked how Leyland will proceed if funding for the garages is delayed. Mr. Callahan said that Leyland has separated proceeding on DL-1 from the progress on the parking garages. This is important because it will allow construction to start and sends a signal that the project is moving ahead.

Mr. Callahan said that Leyland continues to work with its federal and state lobbyists on assisting with funding for the garages. In response to a question from Ms. Schwab regarding the lobbying firms, Ms. van Zelm said they are hired by Leyland. Ms. van Zelm does have a conference call

with Mr. Toledano and Cindy O'Malley from the national firm of K & L Gates every other week re: status of funding and steps to be taken locally to assist with the efforts to receive funding through Congress.

Ms. van Zelm said that Ms. O'Malley indicated that the Transportation Appropriations bill is scheduled to go to conference (between the House and Senate) in the next two weeks. President Bush has threatened a veto of some of the appropriations bills.

Ms. Schwab asked why forming a redevelopment agency could take awhile. Ms. van Zelm and Ms. Paterson said that the planning needs to run its course. Ms. van Zelm said the members could include Partnership members who live in town. They do not believe that Town Council members could serve.

Mr. Callahan wondered if it would be effective to have a redevelopment agency address other areas in town besides the DL-1 building. There was some discussion of this by the Board members but no conclusion was made.

Membership Development

Ms. Treiber said the focus of the Membership Development Committee going forward is to redo the membership brochure emphasizing the role of the Partnership in advocating for the community during the construction of Storrs Center. The new brochure will wait until after groundbreaking on DL-1.

Ms. Treiber said there are 39 new members with some from the mailing to the Altrusa and League of Women Voters' members. She said that Committee members Dolan Evanovich and John Saddlemire were helping with the University recruitment. She said there are 377 total members with a goal of 400.

7. Adjourn

Ms. Treiber made a motion to adjourn. Janet Jones seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Meeting notes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.